

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With Writers for Hispanic, Religious, and Labor Publications

September 14, 1983

The President It's a pleasure to have you here today. I understand that you've been briefed on some domestic and foreign policy issues, and we're concerned that all Americans are fully aware of what we're doing and how it relates to them.

For those of you in the Hispanic press, I want you to know that my concern is not something new or some grand campaign strategy, as some have indicated. Since my days as Governor of California, I've been aware of the rich contributions that Americans of Hispanic descent have made and are making to our country. Within 24 hours of declaring my candidacy for President in 1979, I outlined a program that emphasized

the importance of better relations among all of us in this hemisphere. I said then and have echoed since at Cancun, during my trip to Central and South America, and during many consultations with the Presidents of Mexico, that we in this hemisphere are all Americans. We worship the same God. We have enormous potential if we can build on the many things that bind us together here, from North to South Pole, in this hemisphere.

And those of you who are with us today from the religious press understand, perhaps better than most, how faith brings people together. Recently I visited Hispanic business leaders in meetings in Florida and

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I thank you all very much for letting me be a part of this, and now you have some questions.

Offensive Weapons in Cuba

O Mr. President—[*inaudible*—I don't have to tell you how much we like you in Miami. You know about that.

There has always been talk about the Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding of 1962. [*Inaudible*—and Bill Casey¹ and Secretary Weinberger have said that the Russian—[*inaudible*—understanding throughout the years on the Cuban—[*inaudible*—bringing offensive weapons into the islands.

What is your position? What are your feelings on this understanding? Should the United States live up to it?

The President. I have been looking at that, and with all the things that are going on, we haven't been able to talk as much as we should about it. But I have to tell you that as far as I'm concerned, that agreement has been abrogated many times by the Soviet Union and Cuba in the bringing in of what can only be considered offensive weapons, not defensive, there. And we'll get around to that.

We did try to open some talks when there seemed to be an indication coming from Cuba that there was a willingness for that. They got nowhere. So we're going to carry on with what we're doing